

## **A Hard Fought Ship: the story of HMS *Venomous* (2017)**

The front cover of this new hardback edition of *A Hard Fought Ship* shows HMS *Venomous* following *Wild Swan* into the narrow harbour of Boulogne to evacuate the Welsh and Irish Guards on 23 May 1940. The V & W Class destroyers taking part in this action were HMS *Vimy*, *Whitshed*, *Vimiera*, *Wild Swan*, *Windsor*, *Venomous* and *Venetia* plus the Flotilla Leader HMS *Keith*. This long chapter describes the role played by all these ships in the operation and will be of special interest to the families of the men who served in these ships and the men they brought home.

But this ship biography of one of the 67 V & W Class destroyers built at the end of the Great War and scrapped at the end of World War II will appeal to anybody interested in naval history, not just the families of the men who served in the V & Ws.

After freezing in the forgotten war in the Baltic in 1919 *Venomous* spent the 1920s in the Mediterranean. She was in the front line when the German blitzkrieg swept across Europe and the V & Ws made high speed dashes across the Channel to bring the troops (and civilians) back from Calais, Boulogne and Dunkirk.

*Venomous* and her sister ships escorted the Atlantic convoys which kept Britain fed and the Arctic convoys which supplied our Russian allies with the weapons to stop the German advance. The book contains aerial photographs taken by the He 111 bombers which attacked Arctic Convoy PQ.15 and sank SS *Cape Corso* and two other ships.

She took part in Operation *Pedestal* which saved Malta and, as the Allies prepared for the landings in North Africa, was ordered to escort the destroyer depot ship HMS *Hecla* to the invasion beaches. When *Hecla* was torpedoed off the coast of Morocco *Venomous* fought the attacking U-boat and rescued 500 survivors (see back cover). This long chapter explains why this disaster happened and will be of special interest to the families of the 500 men rescued by HMS *Venomous*.

*Venomous* escorted convoys along the coast of north Africa including the first through convoy from Gib to Alex and the invasion force to Sicily, Operation *Husky*.

In October 1943 she returned to Britain and was converted to an Air Target ship for training Barracuda Torpedo Bomber aircrew based at Douglas in the Isle of Man. She was nearly lost in a hurricane off the east coast of Scotland before being sent to Kristiansand in Norway to accept the surrender of German naval forces.

***Venomous* and her sister ships were all scrapped after the war but this ship biography is a fitting memorial to the V & Ws and the men who served in them.**

**With fifty thousand more words, a hundred more photographs, five new chapters, a larger format and a completely new design it really is a new book.**

*A Hard Fought Ship: the story of HMS *Venomous**; by R.J. Moore and J.A. Rodgaard.  
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